



American Optometric Association

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July 30, 2013

Honorable Fred Upton
United States House of Representatives
2183 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Henry Waxman
United States House of Representatives
2204 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Joseph Pitts
United States House of Representatives
420 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr.
United States House of Representatives
237 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Upton, Waxman, Pitts and Pallone:

The American Optometric Association (AOA), representing more than 36,000 doctors on the frontline of eye health and vision care, is pleased to support the Medicare Patient Access and Quality Improvement Act of 2013 (HR 2810).

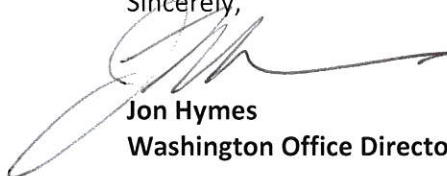
HR 2810 is urgently needed legislation to provide fairness and stability in the Medicare physician payment system. It is especially welcomed by optometrists across the country whose practices and patients have endured more than a decade of payment uncertainty and disruption caused by the current flawed system.

The AOA applauds your leadership and extends deepest thanks to the Committee on Energy and Commerce for its diligent work on HR 2810 and bi-partisan problem-solving approach, and we urge approval of the bill when the panel meets to consider it tomorrow. Our doctors and staff appreciate the dialog we have had with you over the course of this year about strengthening Medicare and expanding access to eye health and vision care. We are particularly pleased to see recently made changes to ensure that Medicare beneficiaries will continue to have full access to their optometrist and that optometrists will continue to be fully recognized for the essential care they deliver.

Doctors of Optometry provide more than two-thirds of all primary eye health and vision care in the United States, including covered physician services (medical eye care) to 6 million Medicare patients annually. Overall, optometrists serve patients in nearly 6,500 communities across the country, and in 3,500 of those communities are the only eye doctors.

The AOA looks forward to continuing to work with you and your colleagues to refine technical and fiscal aspects of this legislation, and to oppose unneeded amendments that would increase costs and reduce choice by impairing patient access to Doctors of Optometry or constraining their full scope of practice. Moreover, we remain eager to continue to be a resource for you on the full range of quality care, patient access and reimbursement issues before Congress.

Sincerely,



Jon Hymes
Washington Office Director